

# ARMY TALKS



## FRANCE



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**EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS, UNITED STATES ARMY**



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## Foreword

**O**UR friendship for France is traditional. We shall never forget the part the French played in helping us gain our freedom and in establishing our United States as a nation. Then, we were fighting for our liberty. Now, we are not only fighting for our liberty, but for world liberty. The French and ourselves have always stood together, shoulder to shoulder, in the cause of freedom. This war is no exception.

**B**ASICALLY and fundamentally we are all in the same boat, and we will all go up or down together. Not only does our friendship inspire us to fight with Frenchmen for the restoration of their beloved France, but common interests, common sense and even our common survival dictate it as a necessity. Anyone who, by word or deed, detracts from our common pull-together is, to just that extent, helping Hitler. Contrary-wise, all who make certain by word and by deed that we all pull together 100 percent, not only in the heat of battle but in our daily contacts behind the lines, contribute greatly to Hitler's downfall.

**O**UR great leader, General Eisenhower, no less than General Pershing in the last war, realizes and stresses that good fellowship and good will in our daily contacts with our Allies are of enormous value to our military effort. We have a special responsibility to General Eisenhower to build a combined team where every man, wherever placed, exerts his full strength with but a single thought—Victory.

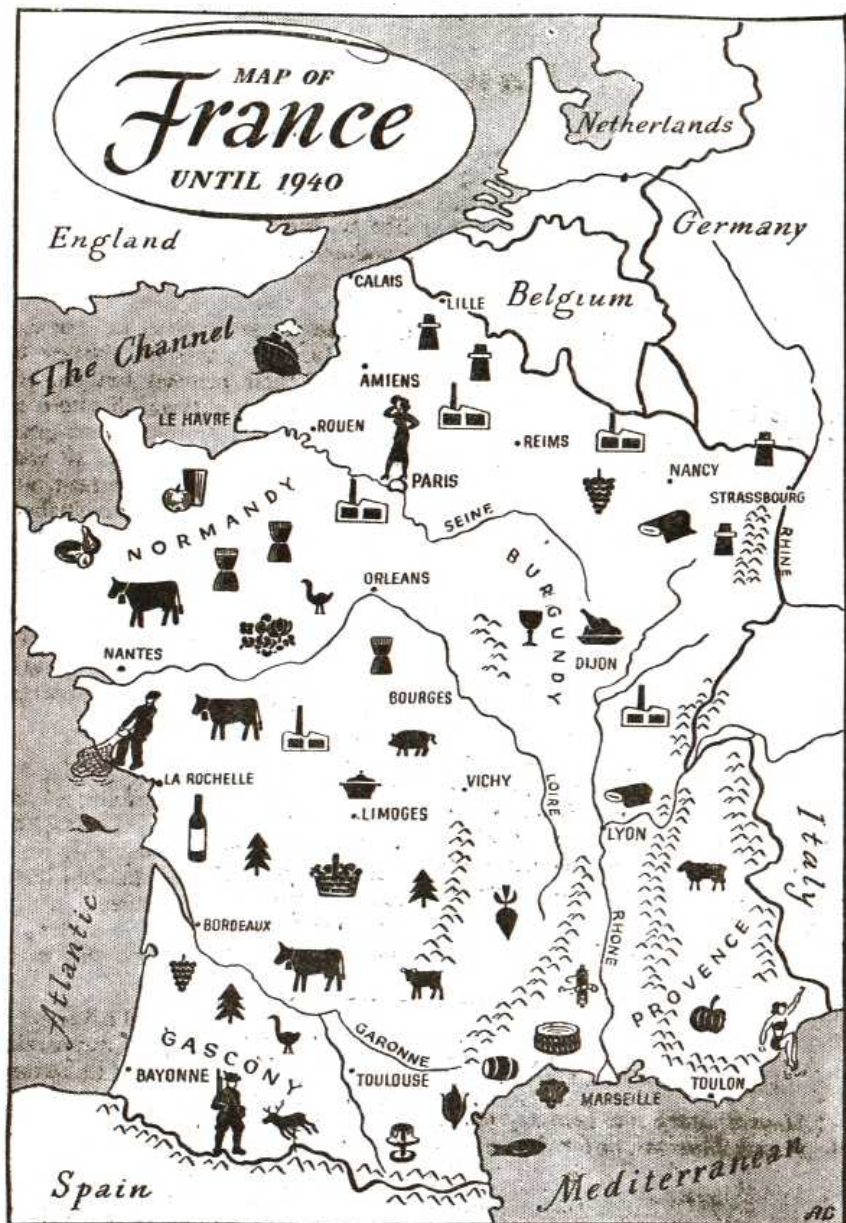
**F**ORTY million French in France are looking forward eagerly to the day of our coming. They will be fighting with us. Something of the problems which the French face is described in the following pages. Soldiers who go into France with sympathy for French problems, will not only make friends for themselves, but will help a great and proud nation to help itself, to free itself, and to work with us for the cause of humanity and freedom. In so doing we are strengthening the understanding between our peoples, an understanding which will be a stabilizing influence throughout the world toward a more enduring peace.

HAROLD R. STARK,  
Admiral, U.S.N., Commander,  
U.S. Naval Forces in Europe.

*(Admiral Stark has been representative of the United States Government to the French Missions, in London, since July, 1942.)*



MAP OF  
*France*  
UNTIL 1940



# ARMY TALKS



## EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS

### FRANCE



**F**RANCE, our great Ally in the last war, may seem only a memory to the Americans fighting this war. Today France lies in darkness across the English Channel: a beaten, humiliated nation, which is now finding the power to fight back and the courage to face the firing squad and Nazi-torture chamber without flinching.

For over three years, few Americans have seen the inside of France and few Frenchmen have seen the United States. The traditional friendship of France and the United States, which goes back for nearly 200 years, has remained the chief tie between the two countries during this long stoppage of normal communication. When we do start meeting the French again—perhaps in their own country—this long-standing friendship will meet its toughest test.

#### Nazi Terror Grips Land

The United States, rich and unconquered, has never known an experience which forty million French have known every day for three years. The French have lived under the Nazi terror. The

Germans have robbed them of food, money, machines, clothes, art treasures and everything they could get their hands on. Our children aren't going hungry. It is up to the country which has the most to give the most. This does not mean only money—it also means sympathy and understanding.

Pre-war France, not including overseas colonies, had an area of 212,000 square miles. The combined area of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin is 244,000 square miles. France had a population of 41,000,000. The above five states of the Union have a population of 27,000,000.

#### Colonies Bigger Than U.S.

The French Colonial Empire is big in area. Before the war, the French colonies overseas covered 4,695,000 square miles (the United States and dependencies, 3,734,000 square miles).

At least half the area of the French colonies, however, is accounted for by the Sahara Desert. The total population of these colonies is 70,000,000,

of whom only two or three millions, mostly in North Africa, are Frenchmen.

Most of this Empire lies in Africa. There are many other colonies, however: Indo-China in the Far East,

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several city-states in India, two small islands called St. Pierre and Miquelon, off the coast of Canada, Martinique and French Guiana in the Caribbean area, Tahiti and other islands in mid-Pacific. That the sun never sets on British soil is true, and this is true of French soil as well. Like all colonial powers, France had plenty of native problems with her colonies.

### **Most Frenchmen Belong In Middle Pay Bracket**

The great majority of Frenchmen are either peasants or small shopkeepers; artisans, white-collar workers. Most of the peasants are small independent landowners. Peasants in town and country both are serious, hard-working, thrifty and conventional. Most of them would seem to the average American as close with their money as the traditional Scot.

They drink wine with their meals, except in Normandy and Brittany, where they drink cider instead; but Frenchmen rarely get drunk. They are steady-going people, strict in their family loyalties, and by no means free and easy about love. They have small families, since they feel obliged to provide for their children and keep the family property intact.

### **They Tend to Stay at Home**

By American standards, French peasants are rather unenterprising. They won't gamble where money is concerned, and prefer to keep as far as possible in the ways of their fathers. In the North, especially, the peasants are a dour and silent lot. In the towns and all over the South the ordinary French folk are livelier, more cheerful and talkative. On the whole, few Frenchmen in real life live up to the Hollywood model of the gay, amorous, talkative Latin.

All Frenchmen are well satisfied with being Frenchmen, just as we are glad to be Americans. They feel that

France is the most civilized of nations. Of course, they know she is no longer the strongest, and they know she has just been badly beaten. But they certainly don't feel they are a small insignificant nation.

Frenchmen, with the exception of the few engaged in business dealings with foreigners, tend to be ignorant of other peoples and other languages. The French are an insular people. They would rather stay at home than see the world. This doesn't mean they don't get on well with foreigners. It's just that they prefer staying in France.

### **Colonies Were Ignored**

The French colonies are the concern of a few governmental experts. Ordinary Frenchmen are not, like ordinary Britishers, really familiar with their overseas lands. This is a fact to be remembered if we wish to understand why the French Government did not transfer itself to the colonies in 1940 and continue the fight.

In important respects, Frenchmen are much more like Americans in politics and social activities than they are like Germans or Britishers. Frenchmen are good democrats in a non-party way. They are rather distrustful of the government and of government agents, and they show this in many little ways.

### **French Like Americans When They Get Orders**

A sign "Keep off the Grass" seems to many Frenchmen, as to many Americans, an invitation to picnic at that particular spot. They have none of the sheeplike fondness for obedience the Germans have, nor do they obey out of a kind of club-spirit, as do the British.

Socially, too, Frenchmen, like Americans, behave as if they believed men are at least approximately equal. Their old aristocracy has no legal

standing, and doesn't carry much weight even socially. Every Frenchman, no matter how poor, is good enough to be called "Monsieur."

### France More Stable Than History Hints

France as a going concern, a social organism, is a much more stable nation than its numerous revolutionary changes of government since 1789 would lead an American to believe. These changes have mostly been at the top and usually involved little violence. In three cases, 1814, 1870 and 1940, revolutions have been the result of military defeat and enemy occupation of Paris.

It is true that there has been division in French politics between the conservative Catholic Right and the radical free-thinking Left. The relatively recent and only partial establishment of large-scale industry in France has introduced what the socialists call a class-conscious industrial proletariat. This has made politics more complicated.

### France Can Still be Great

The phrase "the two Frances," often used to indicate that there is a sort of unbridgeable abyss between two sorts of Frenchmen, is a great exaggeration. Beneath all their political differences there is a real unity of habit and feeling. Given international order, and hence economic and political security, France should be able to work out a stable democratic government.

France was beaten in battle in May and June of 1940. She was overrun by the victorious German army. Yet France can still be a great world-power. The most important thing for Americans to realize about France are her past greatness and her present-day influence, geographically and through her man-power, on the whole continent of Europe. The position of France today must not blind us when looking to the France of tomorrow. France remains important.

### Land Strong Under Napoleon

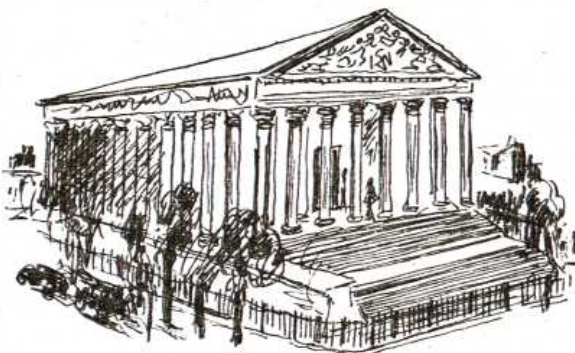
A little over a hundred years ago, when Europe was the center of the world, France under Napoleon was the strongest single nation in the world, except for sea-power. Since then

the rise of Germany and Russia in Europe, of the United States and Japan outside Europe, and the continued strengthening of Britain and the British Empire, have made the position of France *relatively* less important.

### French Empire Has World Importance

That is only to say that mankind has passed from political problems centered on Europe to political problems centered on the world. Even on this modern scale of world-politics, France and the French Empire bulk large. Smart cracks about France now being a second-rate power are unnecessarily wounding to our French friends.

Future actions of the liberated





French nation will decide what place in the world France shall occupy.

France went down in 1940, but not out. There are many signs at the end of 1943 that France is rising again, and her long history gives an even better "form-sheet" on which to base assurance of her come-back.

### **Invasion not New**

The events of 1940 were nothing new in French history. In the thousand years of her existence as an independent nation, dozens of victorious enemy armies—Norman, English, German,



Austrian, Russian, Spanish—have tramped the streets of Paris. Perhaps her lowest point was reached in the fifteenth century, just before the coming of Saint Joan of Arc.

Sometimes her "lows" followed closely on her "highs." In 1812 the triumphant French army under Napoleon was in Moscow; in 1814 Napoleon had abdicated and the triumphant Russian, British and German armies were in Paris. A dozen times in the past France has displayed her unusual powers of recovery and her ability to come back after defeat. She is doing so again.

### **SUMMARY**

*Although her armies were beaten and her land occupied, France is far from finished and 40,000,000 hard-*

*working, patriotic French men and women cannot be ignored in any consideration of Europe. Their confidence in the command of the French Army was shaken by defeat. but Frenchmen, who are much like Americans in their belief that one man is as good as the next, will recover from this invasion as they have from others—in fact the rise of the Fighting French proves that this recovery is already under way.*

**How does France compare in size with the Middle Western States? How did the size of the country's pre-war colonies compare with the United States and dependencies?**

### **Geography was Factor Of 1940 French Defeat**

The events of 1940, then, need explanation, not apology. The explanation is basically simple. The French armies were beaten decisively in the field by German armies—armies better led and better equipped, especially with planes and tanks.

Once these armies were beaten, there was nowhere in France for them to go. Remember, the great nation of France could fit into the state of Texas with 55 thousand square miles to spare.

### **Armies Couldn't Retreat**

A French retreat like the Russian retreat to Stalingrad and the Caucasus, or even to Leningrad and Moscow, is impossible. French armies backing up the same distance from the Rhine would be out in the Atlantic Ocean. Nor has France what Britain has, a channel to protect her from invading land armies. She is in the same position as Germany and all the other countries of Western and Central Europe. Once their field armies are beaten these countries have, for the time being at least, to give up.



It is true that all was not well with France internally in 1940. The world economic depression, the cost of rearmament in face of Hitlerite Germany, a tragic lack of great leaders, all struck France at the same time.

She had never made up for the bleeding of 1914-18. France lost a million and a half men in the last war, the United States lost 119 thousand. French officials failed completely in 1939 to prepare Frenchmen or to provide arms against the growing German might which threatened to crush France.

### **Nazi Propaganda Clicked**

All this time the German enemy continued to carry out its successful propaganda campaign which for years before 1939 was being aimed at undermining French morale. France's geographic size and position with regard to the enemy made it easy for the German radio to blanket the whole of France and for spies of fifth columns to slip back and forth across the border.

Yet with all this France carried out her military obligations to Poland; involved her precious armies in the desperate confusion of Holland and Belgium, and was beaten by enemy superiority in tanks and planes.

### **"France Was Rotten"**

#### **Theory Just Not True**

It is simply not true to say that France was "rotten" inwardly in 1940, nor even on the edge of civil war. Compare France with a person. Every healthy human being is full of disease germs. These germs only undermine his health when some accident breaks down his normal immunity. What really let the always-present germs of political disease undermine France was the German break-through at Sedan in May, 1940.

Once the French armies were decisively defeated, the Government was faced with the choice between an armistice with the enemy or a removal to French North Africa to continue the fight. All things considered, it is remarkable that the decision to ask for an armistice was so close, that so many in the government wanted to follow the advice of the Prime Minister, M. Reynaud, and go to Africa. Only by a sort of coup d'état did Marshal Pétain carry the day.

### **Truce Divided France**

Frenchmen are rarely fully conscious of their empire, and all their national instincts keep them wrapped up in metropolitan France. Actually, North Africa, as we were all to learn in November, 1942, was not the place for a last-ditch fight by French Republicans. Its French ruling class were already half-won to totalitarian ideas, and a Reynaud government in 1940 would have had hard going there. The Germans might have occupied all French Africa had there been no Vichy government.

The armistice concluded by Marshal Pétain in June, 1940, divided France into two zones. The larger zone included Paris and the whole Atlantic and Channel coasts. This zone was to be occupied by the German army. The smaller zone with its capital at Vichy included the big cities of Lyons and Marseilles and was to be left "technically" unoccupied. This zone was to be governed directly by the new government of the National Revolution under 87-year-old Pétain.

### **Some Frenchmen Backed**

#### **Nazi Plans for Country**

A detailed account of what happened in France during the last four years is not possible here, but the broad lines are clear. A very small minority of Frenchmen—some intellectuals, some

big business men, and some of the more violent working-class leaders—rallied frankly to the German cause. A large number of good Frenchmen who had fallen under German propaganda were also convinced that France's only hope was to knuckle under. The Germans encouraged this belief.

### Some Thought Nazis Were Sure to Win War

Many of these "collaborators" were mere careerists, who thought Germany was bound to win and wanted to get on the band-wagon. Others were convinced Fascists, and still others—stray radical intellectuals—actually seem to have taken Goebbels and Co. at their word and believed that the National German Socialist Workmen's Party really was a revolutionary socialist movement.

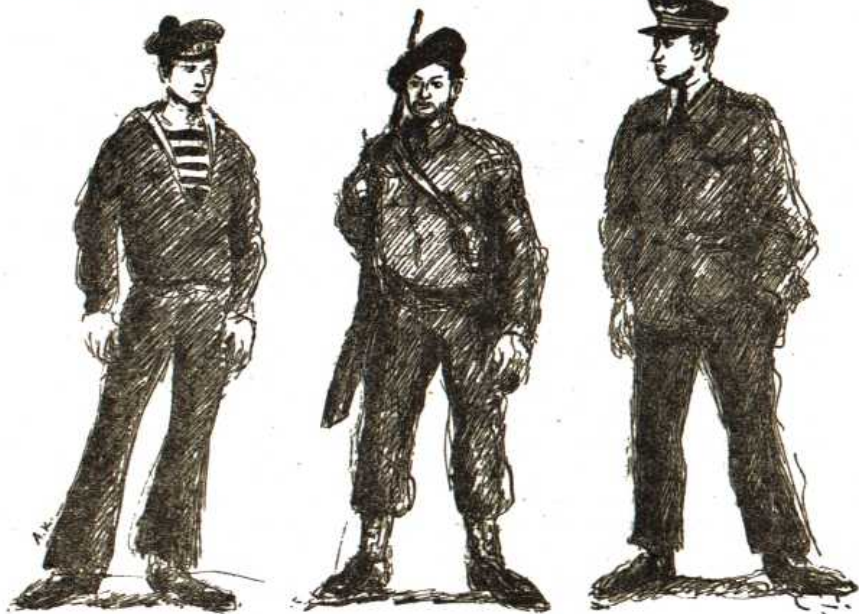
These collaborators, who soon centered their efforts under German protection in Paris, were a small if

noisy minority and never had a hold on the French people.

A second group, the group centering around Vichy and Marshal Pétain, probably did command in the summer of 1940 the sometimes reluctant loyalty of the mass of Frenchmen. This group was itself a strange mixture. A small number of enthusiasts really believed that under Pétain France could be reborn, that there really was a National Revolution. They were not exactly Fascists, nor even totalitarians. They wanted an orderly hard-working Catholic France, trusting its leaders to guide it to full recovery. They had no love for Germany, and no desire to collaborate.

### Vichy Had Its Followers

Vichy, too, had its band-wagon followers. But the great bulk of these ordinary Frenchmen who accepted Vichy did so because they believed Britain beaten already. German propaganda is a powerful weapon and





when combined with success in the battlefields German propaganda really hit home. Not many French doubted the German claims in 1940, that "Britain's neck would be rung like a chicken in five weeks."

Finally, a third group refused to give up the fight. This group was divided, largely by the accident of whether its members happened to be inside or outside of France in June, 1940. Those men outside France became the Free French—later the Fighting French—and those men inside France formed the Resistance Groups in France itself.

### SUMMARY

*After the German break-through at Sedan, France was forced to capitulate because there simply was not enough room to fall back and re-form. The French Government would have been greatly handicapped if it had attempted to carry on the war from North Africa because the colony was largely in the hands of elements more or less receptive to the Nazi ideas. Some Frenchmen, of Metropolitan France, welcomed the defeat as the only means of creating a strong, orderly government in the country. Others rallied around Marshal Pétain and the Vichy Government, believing France could work out her future by collaborating with the Nazis. A third group, with members both inside and outside France, determined to carry on the struggle under General Charles de Gaulle and the Underground Resistance leaders.*

**Could the French General Staff have carried out a defense in depth strategy similar to that used successfully in Russia? Why? What are the facts about the theory that "France was rotten"? Did the actions of the French reveal a knowledge of the causes**

**and progress of the war, up to and after the Franco-German Armistice Agreement?**

### Gen. de Gaulle Emerges To Lead Fighting French

Everyone now knows how a little-known French General escaped to England and, with the support of Winston Churchill, organized remnants of the French forces to fight on against Germany. General de Gaulle's radio broadcast appeal of June, 1940, to the French nation stirred the whole world and reminded us all in those black days that "France has lost a battle. She has not lost the war." The French continued the battle—in the Pacific, in Africa, on convoy duty to Russia—with their remaining troops and supplies.

Under the pressure of many and grave difficulties, de Gaulle has made mistakes. Those very qualities which made him continue a last-ditch fight have also made him, on occasions, not an easy person to deal with.

The Free French Movement under de Gaulle soon took on a kind of political trusteeship for the mother country which, under German oppression, was unable to speak for itself. The de Gaullist movement became a kind of Government in Exile.

### Leaders were Unknown

This Fighting French Government in London differed from other Exile Governments in that it was not the last government voted by the people of France before the collapse, but was formed from elements then little known to the French people. It was for this reason that the American and British Governments never recognized de Gaulle and his followers as the Government of France. However, the Fighting French were given full lend-lease aid and armed protection in the Pacific.

The United States took the position that no government could be considered the rightful government of France until such time as the people of France were free to choose for themselves. The de Gaullists in their devoted loyalty to their leader and their sensitive feelings over the military "humiliation" of France were quick to resent this seeming refusal on the part of Great Britain and the United States to admit France to her position in world affairs.

### Misunderstandings Existed Between U.S. and France

To say that a misunderstanding, possibly unavoidable, existed between the Fighting French and ourselves is hardly putting the case too strongly. The important thing is to face and overcome this misunderstanding. The best way to do that is to remember what trouble the French are in. Try to remember that Frenchmen like Americans and that our help to the French isn't just money and supplies.

Final judgment of the political actions of de Gaulle and the Fighting French must be left to the French in France when they are liberated from the German yoke. The military record of the Fighting French is full of heroic achievements: the defense of Bir Hakeim in the Libyan desert during the Allied retreat to the lines of El Alamein; the sinking of two German

subs. in one engagement by the corvette *Acomit*; the superb convoy duty of French vessels getting supplies through to Russia. The world will not forget that the armed forces of the French Republic under de Gaulle and his Fighting French never ceased to assail the Axis.

### Resistance Groups Attack Invaders

In France, after the collapse of the Government, groups of men and women who refused to give up the fight, began to organize Resistance Groups. At first these groups were separate units. As months passed, and the German pressure grew stronger, the Resistance Organizations united their forces, until today all France is bound up in a network of Resistance.

Furthermore, Britain did not fall and the United States entered the struggle. Frenchmen took heart again.

### French Communists Held Aloof

Before Germany invaded Russia the French Communists had held aloof, though almost none of them had gone over to collaboration. After the German attack on Russia in June, 1941, they became one of the most active and efficient of the Resistance Groups. By propaganda through clandestine newspapers and leaflets, by sabotage against factories working for Germany, by strikes and threats of strikes, by



Des Ouvriers

Un Officier

Un Prêtre

Un Homme d'Affaires

Les Paysans



direct guerilla attacks on German lines of communications and on German personnel, the Resistance Groups have gradually roused their countrymen against the Nazi invader.

By the end of 1943, collaborators and Vichy supporters had diminished to a small group, and the overwhelming majority of Frenchmen were back in spirit in the fight once more. These men and women await the moment when an Allied landing will enable them to help throw the Germans out.

### Landings were Dramatic

November 7, 1942, was a dramatic moment for patriotic Frenchmen everywhere. The first result of the Anglo-American landing in French North Africa was to bring to a head grave political problems. General de Gaulle and the Fighting French were not included in the plans or landing operations. The American officials who had remained in Vichy and in North Africa, because their Government had been able to maintain relations with unoccupied France, based their reports on conditions as they saw them. The United States and British Army Chiefs made their decisions on those reports.

### Vichy Held Power In North Africa

North Africa was dominated mili-

tarily and politically by a rabid anti-de Gaulle group of Frenchmen making money on the Vichy-Pétain basis. They were prepared to fight us to the end if we tried to force upon them leaders of our own choice. Darlan was chosen eventually because he was the only man with authority to order the fighting to stop—or to give the order for the battle between French and Americans to continue.

### Agreement With Darlan Avoided a Civil War

Given the pro-Vichy conditioning of the Frenchmen, both military and civilian, who ran North Africa, the pact concluded on the spur of the moment with the Vichyite Darlan was the only way to make sure of the military success of the operation without great loss of American and British and French life. Had the Anglo-Americans attempted to install a de Gaullist regime in North and West Africa, they would almost certainly have provoked a civil war, and jeopardised the whole operation.

The de Gaullists would have been willing to take this risk of civil war. The United States was not—at the expense of American lives. As it was, the Anglo-Americans, with invaluable assistance from the French troops of the regular army as well as Fighting French troops, drove



Le Police Des Etudiants Un Professeur Une Midinette Un Garçon de Café Un Peintre Un Soldat

the Axis from the African continent and put a new face on the whole military situation.

### **F.C.N.L. Established in Algiers**

North Africa caused a division of Frenchmen outside France which for a time seemed unsolvable. The assassination of Darlan, though not to be condoned, did clear the way for General Giraud to take over. Giraud had been the British and American choice as a Commander in North Africa; but the unexpected presence of Darlan interfered with the plan. General Giraud, though unpopular



with the de Gaullists as a military official of the old regime who had brought defeat to France, was none the less admitted to be an

honest man without any taint of the collaborationist in his record.

After months of argument, the French forces were all united under the Committee of National Liberation at Algiers. The Committee was given a joint Presidency of de Gaulle and Giraud. There were 12 members, six to be chosen by each President.

### **U.S., Britain Announce Their Cooperation With Committee**

In August, 1943, the United States and Great Britain announced their decision to cooperate with the Committee as the French authority responsible for all French possessions outside France itself. Formal recognition of any Government of France is reserved both by United States and Great Britain until France is free of the Germans and the 41 million French are able to choose by vote what their government is to be. The United States maintains that it is neither our business nor our right to

choose a government for the French. We may advise; we must give help; but we have no desire to force our will upon Liberated France.

### **Consultative Assembly Formed From Various French Groups**

In October, 1943, a Consultative Assembly with advisory powers was formed in Algiers from all the various French groups actively engaged against Germany, including many representatives of Resistance groups in France itself, who had recent first-hand knowledge of conditions at home. This Assembly will take on the functions of an informal parliament, and should help greatly to insure that the Committee of Liberation has real and effective touch with French opinion. Just how much effect this democratic and very good development will have on the Committee and its members is still open to question. Time will tell whether the Committee which has the power intends to listen to the Assembly or ignore it.

### **Grave Problems Remain**

Many grave problems still face France. Above all, there are for the mass of Frenchmen at home the inescapable and tragic problems of the German occupation, with shortages of goods of all kinds, semi-starvation in the cities, lack of medical care and supplies, the constant drain of her able-bodied men to Germany as conscript laborers. Furthermore, there is the necessity of submitting to loss of French lives and property through Allied air attacks on German installations in France, the increasing disorder as Frenchmen step up the tempo of sabotage and guerilla warfare, as youths flee to the "maquis" (bush) to avoid labor conscription, as patriotic Frenchmen prepare for concerted action on "D-day." Though France must still suffer greatly before the final liberation



from the German occupation, that liberation is now assured. It is the problems of a liberated France, and the part which Americans can play in their solution, that must now concern us.

### America and the Future of France



There are two extremes of possible international relations after the war. One is the continuation of power politics among "sovereign" states. The other is the creation of an effective international organization which will have the legal machinery—and authority—necessary to decide disputes among member nations. Actually something in between these extremes will probably result. There probably will be an international organization within which "sovereign" nations will continue to carry on in a restricted way some of the old traditional power diplomacy. In such a world it is certain that Americans are going to have to play an important part. It will be to American interest to have a strong France willing and able to cooperate with the United States to preserve peace.

### Germany Will be Hostile, We Need a Friendly France

If we assume that power politics are going on we certainly don't want France to be against us. For a generation, at least, we shall face a bitter and hostile Germany. We must not allow France to drift into a combination with Germany. Such a combination may not seem possible today; but remember that Italy was on our side in the last war. We must guard against a selfish peace which might do what Hitler tried, and failed, to do. This was to turn Europe into an anti-America, anti-British Continent. In terms of power-politics, then, a friendly France is a "must" for the United States.

If after the war, however, there is again order throughout the world, we don't want a dissatisfied and disillusioned France to become a bad and uncooperative member of the League or any such world organization. However you look at the problem, a France restored to strength, security and self-respect is essential if the peace to come is to be a better and more lasting peace than the one that failed in 1919.

### France Has to Build Own National Future

It goes without saying that the French themselves must be the main builders of their future. Neither we nor the British have a right to interfere in French internal politics. But the attitude of the American Government—and of individual American citizens—can help or hinder the true recovery of France. To aid in the solution of French problems, we shall have to use more tact and more imagination than we have yet used in our dealings with Frenchmen.

We can and indeed are already planning to help through the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration in the indispensable task of assisting France to restore the economic basis of her life. It would be a mistake to believe that we can buy the friendship of France. We cannot afford to limit our generosity to economic matters. Nations, like individuals, do not live by bread alone. Basically, the problem of our relations with France—that is with Frenchmen—is human and psychological. We are dealing with people who think and feel as we do.



### Frenchmen Have Had Shock

Frenchmen have suffered a psychological shock. It will not always be easy

for an American to understand how a good Frenchman feels today. As a nation, we have never been beaten. We have not known what it means to be the underdog. The French are—and have a right to be—a proud and sensitive people. They may sometimes seem surly and ungrateful even to their friends because of what they have suffered.

Americans are known to be blunt. We have not always been tactful in our dealings with other peoples. Like the British, we give the impression of effortless superiority and condescension. Recently, having become aware that we need the friendly cooperation of the peoples of Latin America, we have been at work on the famous "Good Neighbor" policy. We are having a hard time to overcome the dislike which Latin Americans felt towards us in the early years when they were all "greasers" to us.

### **We Must Not Patronize**

If we want to get on with Frenchmen, we must learn at once that they are among the finest peoples of today. For a while, we must meet Frenchmen even more than half way. Just now, they have been hurt, and they are touchy and suspicious. We have to make allowances for this attitude. This does not mean that they should be given everything they ask for. We can be firm with them; but our firmness should be the firmness of one friend to another. We Americans are proud of

our ability to sell our goods and put forward our ideas. It is time we realized that we are faced with the most important diplomatic job we have ever undertaken. The best that we have to offer is needed now for the good of the whole world.

The Statue of Liberty is the first thing that Europeans coming to America see. It has come to symbolize liberty to the free peoples at home and to the oppressed peoples of the world. Standing in the harbor of New York, holding high the Torch of Freedom, the Statue of Liberty faces towards her birthplace—suffering France—and promises that Americans will not forget their friendship for France nor their belief in her future.

### **SUMMARY**

*After the collapse of the French Armies, Underground groups became active under the very noses of the Germans. The North African landings, in November of 1941, crystalized French opinion but made the deal with Admiral Jean Darlan necessary. Our collaboration with Fighting French forces reveals a true understanding of the current events as they affect the conduct of the war and the establishment of the Peace.*

**What is the French Committee of National Liberation? Why is it important that Frenchmen regard us as troops of liberation?**





## ***Facts About France***

**Boundaries :** With 212,000 square miles of territory, France ranks third in size among European states. The country is about twice the size of the State of Colorado. France is bounded on the West and Northwest by the Bay of Biscay and the English Channel ; on the Northeast and East by Belgium, Luxemburg, Germany, Switzerland and Italy and on the South by the Mediterranean Sea and Spain. France has good natural boundaries in every direction but the Northeast where she most needs one.

**Rivers :** East of the great Central Plateau, called in French the "Massif Central," lies the Rhone-Saone Valley, a broad highway leading from the Mediterranean through the heart of France and into Switzerland. Two other important rivers, the Loire and the Garonne, flow westward into the Bay of Biscay. The famous rivers of Northern France, scene of bitter fighting early in this war, are comparatively small and not of great importance, except as links in the country's river-canal system.

**Climate :** Although France is located in the same latitude as Ontario, it has a much milder climate, because of the Gulf Stream. The Mediterranean Coast, the famous "French Riviera," is like Florida, or Southern California, as far as sunshine and palm trees are concerned. An ample rainfall over the rest of the country benefits agriculture.

**Population :** The pre-war population of France was about 42,000,000—a figure which represented an increase of about 7,000,000 in the last 100 years. A birthrate of 15 children for each one thousand persons in France during 1936-38 meant, however, that the country was falling behind in the population race with Germany, where births averaged 19 per thousand for the same period. This low birthrate meant that the percentage of old people in the population was steadily increasing and, from 1851 to 1931, this trend resulted in an increase in persons over 60 years of age from 102 per thousand of population to 140 per thousand.

The population was almost equally divided between city and country dwellers. The last figures available show that approximately 20,000,000 Frenchmen lived in small country villages or towns while approximately 22,000,000 were residents of communities of 2,000 population or over. Because of war casualties in 1914-1918, a little more than 52 per cent. of the population were women.

**Provincialism :** Provincialism is the group of customs and speech typical of a province or section. You have probably noted such differences in fellow Americans and you will also find them among Frenchmen. A Breton is as different from a Basque or a Burgundian as a Vermont Yankee is from a Hoosier or a Georgian. These differences in speech and living habits result from the geography, population elements, history, and economy of the area concerned.

**Geographic Influence :** The geography of a section often determines how the inhabitants earn their bread and butter, and, finally, how they talk and think. Lorraine's iron ore made miners and steel workers of the people there. The

mountains of eastern France, unfit for ordinary farming, encouraged sheep herding. The nearness of the ocean led many Bretons to become sailors. The "personality" of a province is largely based on what people do for a living, and that depends on the natural resources available.

*Races :* Like ourselves, the French are a mixture of races. The Celts, Germans, and Romans were the most important elements. Where one element was more numerous there is likely to be evidence of it in modern speech and customs. The influence of the Romans in Provence, the Celts in Brittany and the Norsemen in Normandy can still be seen today.

Many of the medieval Kings of France lacked the power to control their powerful nobles. These ambitious lords each ruled his own area as he pleased, making war against his neighbors and sometimes against the king himself. Bad roads, provincial taxes or tariffs and the danger of travel discouraged trade and the exchange of ideas. All these things encouraged local customs and local patriotism.

*Language :* Several centuries of strong central government reduced but did not eliminate provincialism. Even today ten million people in southern France speak Provençal, a language totally different from the Parisian French taught in American schools. The Parisian himself is a distinct type with his own slang and cosmopolitan view-point. Both the Bretons and the Basques have preserved their separate languages. Similar if less striking differences may be noted in other sections of France. The American who wishes to understand the French must take provincialism into account.

*Employment :* About 8,000,000 people were directly concerned with the job of farming either as laborers or landowners. Unlike the United States, about 40% of the field work was done by women. Around 2,500,000 people owned no land and worked as farmhands for others. Only two per cent. of French landowners hold more than 100 acres. The city population included about 7,000,000 industrial laborers, 1,000,000 office workers, 700,000 servants and a middle class of professional people and small business men of around 6,000,000.

*Agriculture :* The French have usually grown most of their own food. The more important crops are listed :—

Crop					In units of 1,000 metric tons		
					1936	1937	1938
Potatoes .. .. .	..	..	..	..	15,251	15,911	17,094
Wheat .. .. .	..	..	..	..	6,930	7,017	10,148
Sugar beets .. .. .	..	..	..	..	8,256	8,666	8,120
Oats .. .. .	..	..	..	..	4,214	4,347	5,449
Barley .. .. .	..	..	..	..	1,019	1,017	1,273
Rye .. .. .	..	..	..	..	715	740	804
Apples and pears (non-cider) ..	..	..	..	..	282	255	
Small fruits .. .. .	..	..	..	..	130	142	
Nuts .. .. .	..	..	..	..	38	42	
					In units of 1,000 gallons		
Wine .. .. .	..	..	..	..	868,978	1,130,259	1,273,976
Cider .. .. .	..	..	..	..	630,924	379,409	761,222



In 1938 the number of farm animals were : horses, 2,692,000 ; mules, 135,000 ; asses, 185,000 ; cattle, 15,622,000 ; sheep, 9,872,000 ; hogs, 7,127,000 ; and goats, 1,416,000. Horse flesh has frequently been eaten in the past and is probably more important now. Such names as Burgundy and Champagne remind us of the importance of French vineyards. In 1937 France's 136,000,000 acres were used in this fashion : 26.5 million—forest land, 14 million—uncultivated, and 79 million—crops, fallow, and grass. The average French farmer has 17 acres but over two million hold less than 2½ acres.

*Industry :* The principal manufactures in peacetime France were : textiles, clothing, metal and engineering goods, chemicals, perfume, autos, jewellery, china, scientific instruments, wines and brandies. Leading industrial cities are Paris, Rouen, Lyons, Lille, St. Etienne, Toulouse and Strasbourg. The emphasis on luxury goods plus French individualism have encouraged many small businesses. Great monopolies do exist, however, in some industries such as steel production. Good supplies of coal and iron have aided industries such as steel production. Good supplies of coal and iron have aided industrial growth as has the protective tariff.

*Commerce :* The larger part of French foreign trade is handled at the ports of Le Havre, Nantes, Bordeaux and Marseilles. Calais is chiefly important as a passenger port. France's biggest customers in 1938 were :—

Total value—imports				Total value—exports			
\$1,334,190,000				\$880,686,000			
<i>from</i>				<i>to</i>			
United States	..	..	11.4%	Belgium	..	..	13.7%
Great Britain	..	..	7.3%	Great Britain	..	..	11.6%
Belgium	..	..	6.9%	Switzerland	..	..	6.3%
Germany	..	..	6.8%	Germany	..	..	6%
				United States	..	..	5.5%

Profits from French investments abroad and the spending of tourists offset the unfavorable balance of trade. Fuels, raw materials, and some foods were the major imports.

*Transportation :* In 1939 France had 390,000 miles of roads and 26,000 miles of government controlled railroad. In other words France had .12 miles of railroad and 1.37 miles of roadway per square mile as compared to .08 miles of railroad and 1.98 miles of roadway per square mile in the United States. As in the last war French transportation has suffered considerably both from actual destruction and lack of repairs. The condition found by the invasion army will in large part depend on how thoroughly German demolition work is carried out during the German retreat.

*Governmental Changes :* Since 1798 the French have had at least half a dozen major changes in their form of government. Oddly enough the one which lasted longest, the Third Republic, 1870-1940, was at first regarded as a temporary

makeshift. Because of this attitude a formal constitution was never written and the governmental machinery was set up by a series of fundamental laws.

*Governmental Structure :* The president was elected for seven years by the National Assembly composed of Deputies, and the Senate. This is as if our American presidents were chosen by Congress. The real executive power, however, lay in the hands of the premier, who, as in Britain, held office so long as he and his Cabinet had the confidence of the legislature. If defeated on a major issue, the Cabinet was obliged to give up its power. The Chamber of Deputies was elected directly for four years, and the Senate indirectly for nine years. The Third Republic, like most French government of the last 300 years, gave much power to the central government and little to local units.

*Multi-party System :* The two-party system never developed and politics have always involved half a dozen groups, no one of which had enough support to form a Cabinet. Consequently the government had to be carried on by the union of several parties of the same general viewpoint. Such a coalition government could last just so long as the men and parties in it could agree. Governments changed rapidly under this system and the French had about forty different ministries between 1919-39. These changes, however, were not as drastic as they seem, since in most cases some members of the old ministry would take part in the new one.

*Major Parties :* French political groups are usually described as being either of the Right or the Left, thus indicating their conservatism or liberalism. The issues that have separated the Right and the Left in the past have been monarchy versus republicanism, social reforms, the role of the army, the place of the Church in French society. The major parties arranged from Right to Left were the Monarchists (declared illegal in 1936), the National Republican Party, the Democratic-Alliance, the Radical Socialists (who were not radical, but in favor of a middle-of-the-road policy), the Socialists and the Communists.

*Religion :* France is overwhelmingly Catholic, there being only about a million Protestants. Under the Third Republic a bitter struggle has gone on over the role which the Church was to play in the French state. In most matters especially the influence of the anti-clerical party was successful. The statistics indicate that many who were nominally Catholic supported the anti-clerical policy politically. Since 1905 the Church and State have been separate.

*Courtesy is Good Policy :* Troops operating on foreign soil are well advised to learn the local customs and respect them. The lessons we have learned in England about getting on with a host-nation would be of value in France. Of course, no self-respecting person, English, French, or American, wants a rowdy for a guest. Good manners not only show that the individual concerned knows the score, but also pays dividends in the form of good will. Every American soldier can help build a type of friendship which will be as valuable in peace as it is now in war.





# Preparation

In a previous issue of **ARMY TALKS** you were told something about France under the title of "What We'll Find in Europe." Again your attention is turned to that great nation, partly because of our united responsibility to understand its suffering and its courage, partly because in the not distant future some of us may be very grateful to know as much about France and the French people as we can.

**Few Nations can be badly defeated** in war and maintain their dignity and self-respect. Defeat means, along with unanswerable humiliations, disillusion and disillusion usually betokens a break in moral enterprise. Whatever the causes of France's military defeat, and they were many and complicated, they cannot be honestly attributed to the moral corruption of the French people, any more than today the Vichy government can claim to be representative of the French people.

**The complex maze of French politics** during the past decade was bound to result in an ugly quagmire in which the true spirit of the French people would be for the time bogged down and stifled. No one who was well acquainted with the situation could have hoped for or predicted any other outcome. The remarkable fact is that so many of the people have been able to avoid the bog and by sheer audacity range themselves in body and spirit in opposition to their conquerors. Here is a story which has recently appeared in the press that will give color to what has been said:—

"For your own safety—for the sake of France, of resistance—do not go, young men born in 1923! That was the impassioned warning uttered to the youth of France over the secret transmitter 'Honneur et Patrie' when, a few weeks ago, it was known that Hitler was demanding the '1943' class to reinforce the 800,000 slaves he has already despatched from France to forced labor in Germany. Honneur et Patrie, speaking for France's resistance movement, told these young men not to present themselves at the medical examinations (for sick men, even consumptive and cardiac cases, are taken), but to escape from home as soon as possible and join the secret army of resistance.

"This army now numbers some 200,000. Its members have chosen to live as 'outlaws' in the woods and mountains. Their formations are scattered all over France; some districts, such as Savoy, the Ardennés and Brittany, have become famous. It is Corrèze, with its deep valleys, its tangled copses, its small-holdings, its plateaux blessed with a mild climate, which beats all records so far.

"A high official from Corrèze, responsible for executing Vichy's orders there, is said to have raised his hands to heaven in despair. 'Not only do the youth

of Correze refuse to respond to Laval's appeal,' he lamented, 'but they are reinforced by bands of young men from other districts and from the great towns, Paris, Toulouse, Bordeaux. They have formed camps of resistance against which we are helpless.'

"The term 'maquis' has become proverbial. The word originally applied to the broom-covered cliffs of Corsica; it has now become a generic term for all the hiding places—the grottoes, caverns, deserted huts, clearings—where France's youth in revolt is awaiting liberation. It is still difficult and dangerous to be anti-German and anti-Vichy, for the Gestapo is pouring out money for its spies and stool-pigeons; it is easy for a well-paid spy to give away the employer, who is helping his workers escape conscription, cheap for a Black Market profiteer to denounce the miller who gives his flour to men of the maquis instead of the German Army. Yet, though a few traitors have been found to sell out, it is universally agreed that the people of France cannot be bought over."

**As you are undoubtedly aware** France is being systematically bled by Germany. Every year 600,000 tons of corn, 10,000 tons of cheese, 650 tons of fodder, 1,100,000 tons of hay, 228 tons of meat, 250,000 tons of potatoes and 4,400,000 gallons of wine are sent to Germany not to mention the financial tax. The wonder is not that the French should be broken in spirit, but that they should not be. And the evidence indicates that their old dauntless courage still carries on despite a cruel master and traitors among their own people.

**This issue of ARMY TALKS** has been carefully prepared in an effort to bring the truth of the present crisis of France before you, and to give you a sufficient record of the past so that you will be competent to form a just and a fair opinion. It is urged that the discussion leader read the copy with the greatest care, and that he give out as much of the information contained in it as his speaking time permits. The following suggestions are made:—

1. Acquire a large-sized map of France if possible, and display it before the group. (*See current issue of YANK for large European map.*)
2. Invite a member of the 'Fighting French' to attend the meeting, and ask him to participate in the discussion. He may be a sailor, a soldier, or a flyer—it doesn't matter.
3. Hang a French flag beside an American and a British flag in the room where the discussion is held. If possible get pictures of Generals de Gaulle and Giraud and place them where they can be seen. If a phonograph can be secured, try to get a record of the Marseillaise and play it to start off the meeting.
4. If some copies of a Free French paper can be found, have them on display, as well. Many of the men may need to brush up on their French. These ideas may seem melodramatic, but they are often effective.





# QUESTIONS

## FOR THE DISCUSSION

**Q. What were some of the causes of the French defeat ? p. 8.**

**Q. What are some of the results of the French defeat ? p. 10.**

**Q. What can we, collectively and as individuals, do to help the French people during the present crisis ? p. 15.**

**Q. Why should the United States have any sense of responsibility toward France or the French ?**

**Q. What have our relations with the French been in the past ? Friendly ? Unfriendly ? Why ?**

**Q. Does the Vichy Government represent the people of France today ? If so, how do you explain the "camps of resistance" ? If not, Why was the Vichy Government permitted to survive ? Furthermore, if not, What government does represent the people of France at this time ?**

**Q. Do you consider Marshal Petain a patriot ? General de Gaulle ? Was Admiral Darlan ? p. 10.**

**Q. Can France recover and become once again one of the first powers of Europe ? Who contributes most to the prestige of a nation, her statesmen or her people ? p. 7.**

**Q. In what way can the recent history of France influence our confidence in Command and pride in service, and knowledge of the causes and progress of the war, a better understanding of our allies, and our interest in current events and their relation to the war ?**

The following books and pamphlets may prove helpful in increasing an understanding and knowledge of France : *The Twilight of France*, by Alexander Werthe ; *What About France ?* by Capt. E. D. Ziman (Current Affairs, ABCA, December 8, 1943) ; *Rebuilding Europe—After Victory*, by Hiram Motherwell (Public Affairs Pamphlets, No. 81, 1943) ; *Relief and Reconstruction of Europe*, Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1942.

Men who wish to acquire some knowledge of the French language may do so from : *A French Soldier Speaks*, by Jacques ; *French-English, English-French Dictionary of Military Terms*, by Noblet ; *The Soldier's Word and Phrase Book, English-French-German* ; T-M 30-243, *French Phrase Book*, War Department, U.S.A. ; T-M 30-253, *English-French, French-English Military Dictionary*, War Department, U.S.A. The War Department manuals may be secured through your A.G. section.



# Army Talks

**WAS ESTABLISHED TO INSTILL IN ALL  
MILITARY PERSONNEL THE FOLLOWING**



**1 Confidence in the Command.**



**2 Pride in service and a sense of  
personal participation.**



**3 Knowledge of the causes and  
progress of the War.**



**4 A better understanding of our  
Allies.**



**5 An interest in current events  
and their relation to the war  
and the establishment of the peace.**